

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01
/059 W

-----171621 079827 /45

R 171443Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2405
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 0328

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, BU
SUBJECT: CRITICISM CAMPAIGN ESCALATES AND TAKES ON TONE OF DISSI-
DENCE; GOB REACTS SHARPLY

REF: 76 SOFIA 1824

1. SUMMARY: CRITICISM CAMPAIGN CALLED FOR BY JULY CENTRAL
COMMITTEE PLENUM HAS ALWAYS HAD IMPLICIT IN IT NEED FOR

MAKING FINE DISTINCTIONS AS TO WHO AND WHAT MAY BE CRITICIZED.
IT HAS NOW CLAIMED A MAJOR VICTIM WITH EDITOR OF KOMSOMOL
NEWSPAPER NARODNA MLADEZH BEING FIRED AFTER HIS PAPER,
JANUARY 20, PRINTED LENGTHY ARTICLE RIPPING INTO CURRENT
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, PRIVILEGES ACCORDED SENIOR PARTY FIGURES,
AND GROSS MATERIALISM AT ALL LEVELS OF BULGARIAN SOCIETY.
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AMBASSADOR HAS RECEIVED ANONYMOUS LETTER STATING THAT
AUTHORS OF ARTICLE AND FOUR OTHERS ARE "MISSING" AS RESULT
OF THE AFFAIR. END SUMMARY.

2. NARODNA MLADEZH, NEWSPAPER OF DIMITROV COMMUNIST YOUTH
UNION (DKMS), BULGARIA'S KOMSOMOL, JANUARY 20 CARRIED
EXTREMELY LENGTHY ARTICLE IN FORM OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN POET

RADOY RALIN AND POLITICAL CARTOONIST BORIS DIMOVSKI WHICH ZEROES IN ON A NUMBER OF GOB SOFT SPORTS AND SACRED COWS. ARTICLE BEGAN WITH DISCUSSION OF WHY YOUTH IS INFECTED WITH "CONSUMERISM" (DESIRE FOR EASY LIFE, MATERIAL POSSESSIONS, DOING THE LEAST WORK POSSIBLE, ETC.), A PHENOMENON OFTEN--AND SAFELY--ATTACKED IN BULGARIAN PRESS OVER PAST FEW MONTHS. BUT RALIN-DIMOVSKI DISCUSSION OF "CONSUMERISM" CAME TO CONCLUSIONS WHICH, WHILE HARDLY STARTLING IN THEMSELVES, NEVERTHELESS ARE NOT NORMALLY VOICED IN BULGARIAN PRESS: "CONSUMERISM" AMONG YOUTH IS SIMPLY REFLECTION OF "CONSUMERISM" TO BE SEEN IN BULGARIAN SOCIETY AT LARGE INCLUDING SENIOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. IT STEMS FROM DISGUST AT SEEING UNIVERSITY PLACES AND GOOD JOBS GO TO THOSE WITH HIGH-LEVEL CONNECTIONS; FROM BEING HERDED OUT ON LABOR BRIGADES WHEN YOUTH WITH CONNECTIONS PRESENT MEDICAL CERTIFICATES ATTESTING TO DELICATE HEALTH; AT BEING SHUNTED INTO JOBS THEY DON'T LIKE IN PLACES THEY LIKE EVEN LESS; FROM BEING HOUNDED, PRESSURED, EXHORTED AND LECTURED AT ENDLESSLY.

3. WITH THIS AS A BEGINNING, RALIN AND DIMOVSKI THEN PROCEED TO TEAR INTO BULGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION, WHICH THEY CHARACTERIZE AS A SYSTEM FOR PRODUCING LEARNED FOOLS ("IF A DONKEY MAKES A PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM, DOES IT NOT REMAIN A DONKEY NEVERTHELESS"). SYSTEM IS TOO NARROWLY FOCUSED ON SPECIALIZATION AND A KIND OF TECHNICAL TRAINING WHICH IS NO BETTER THAN LOW-LEVEL VOCATIONAL TRAINING, INTENDED TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE INTO FACTORIES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. RESULT IS SPECIALISTS WHOSE SPECIALTY IS MADE CONFIDENTIAL

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OBSOLETE BY THE NEXT WAVE OF TECHNOLOGY AND WHO LACK THE OVERALL GRASP OF SCIENCE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY TRANSITION. NOWHERE IN CONTEMPORARY HIGHER EDUCATION, SAY RALIN AND DIMOVSKI, IS THERE ANY FOSTERING OF CREATIVITY OR IMAGINATION; INDEED, NOWHERE IS THERE ANY RECOGNITION THAT SUCH QUALITIES EXIST AND ARE IMPORTANT. THE AUTHORS CONTRAST THIS PRESENT SYSTEM WITH THE KIND OF EDUCATION RECEIVED BY OUTSTANDING BULGARIAN FIGURES IN THE PAST (INCLUDING SOME COMMUNIST ONES), AND WITHOUT SAYING SO EXPLICITLY, IMPLY THE NEED TO RETURN TO BROAD, HUMANISTIC EDUCATION OF THE TYPE FORMERLY OFFERED BY BETTER EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES (IN WHICH THOSE NATIONAL HEROES HAD STUDIED).

4. HAVING GONE THIS FAR, ARTICLE THEN CONCLUDES WITH FUSILLADE WHICH MOST LITERATE BULGARIANS WILL UNDERSTAND IS DIRECTLY PRECISELY AGAINST BCP INNER SANCTUM, PARTICULARLY THE POLITBURO: WHY, ASK THE AUTHORS, IN THE WAKE OF THE JULY PLENUM, HAS NO IMPORTANT FIGURE COME FORWARD AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SOFIA 0328

SAID, "COMRADES, IN THE INTEREST OF A MORE JUST DIVISION OF
WAGES THROUGHOUT SOCIETY, IN THE INTEREST OF STREAMLINING
GOVERNMENT, OF IMPROVING QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY, I AM GOING
TO GIVE UP MY SECOND OR THIRD OR FOURTH TITLE AND POSITION,
AND JUST CONCENTRATE ON DOING ONE JOB WELL AND DRAWING ONE
SALARY"?

5. BULGARIAN SOURCES TELL US THAT STRENUOUS EFFORTS HAVE
BEEN MADE TO RECALL ALL COPIES OF THE OFFENDING ISSUE.
BULGARIAN TELEGRAPH AGENCY'S 1977 DIRECTORY OF GOVERNMENT
POSITIONS AND THEIR INCUMBENTS APPEARED FIRST WEEK OF
FEBRUARY. IT CONTAINED AN AMENDMENT INDICATING THAT
NARODNA MLADEZH EDITOR GENCHO ARABADZHIEV HAD BEEN DISMISSED
FROM HIS POSITION SOMETIME BETWEEN PRINTING OF THE DIRECTORY
(LATE 1976, FROM INTERNAL EVIDENCE) AND ITS DISTRIBUTION.
WE HAVE SINCE HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT SACKING TOOK
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PLACE FOLLOWING APPEARANCE OF THE RALIN-DIMOVSKI ARTICLE. RADOY RALIN, ABOUT 52, IS WELL-KNOWN POET AND SATIRIST. REPORTEDLY HE WAS EXPELLED FROM BCP, FORBIDDEN TO PUBLISH, AND PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN NORTHERN BULGARIA IN 1969. BORIS DIMOVSKI, ABOUT 52, IS A WELL-KNOWN CAGEONIST BUT OTHERWISE IS NOT KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POLITICAL CRITICISM.

6. DURING SECOND WEEK OF FEBRUARY, DUTCH AMBASSADOR HERE RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS LETTER, WRITTEN IN BULGARIA, ADDRESSED TO HIM AND TO "AMBASSADOR OF THE USA". LETTER REFERRED TO THE RALIN-DIMOVSKI PIECE, WHICH IT CALLED "SEDITIONOUS," STATED THAT SIX PEOPLE HAD BEEN FIRED FROM THEIR JOBS AS RESULT OF ITS APPEARANCE, EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THEIR FATE, AND ASKED THE TWO AMBASSADORS TO "CHECK VERY CAREFULLY". THE SIX, NOT OTHERSIE NAMED, WERE CHARACTERIZED AS "STRUGGLERS FOR FREEDOM" WHOM THE FREE WORLD SHOULD NOT FORESAKE "AS HAS ALMOST ALWAYS HAPPENED TO BULGARIANS." "MERCILESS AUTHORITY HERE IS SUCCESSFULLY TRYING TO COVER UP AND RUTHLESSLY SMOTHER THEM." ASIDE FROM LETTER, RUMOR IS CURRENT AMONG STUDENT CIRCLES THAT ARABADZHIEV, RALIN, DIMOVSKI AND THREE OTHERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

7. COMMENT: BULGARIA'S "NEW CLASS" LIVES CONSPICUOUSLY WELL. INDEED, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE SEEN VISIBLE ENHANCEMENT OF THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING IN RECENT PAST AS NEW MERCEDES BENZES REPLACE OLDER VOLGAS, AS MORE VILLAS ARE CONSTRUCTED IN RESTRICTED, GUARDED AREAS, AND NEW LUXURY FLATS ARE BUILT IN SOFIA FOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP. DURING THEIR DISCUSSION OF "CONSUMERISM," RALIN AND DIMOVSKI ASK IF THIS IS THE KIND OF SOCIETY FOR WHICH THE PARTISANS AND COMMUNIST MARTYRS STRUGGLED. WHILE WE HAVE HEARD THIS KIND OF CRITICISM BEFORE, WE HAVE NEVER SEEN IT IN PRINT.

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8. RALIN-DIMOVSKI ARTICLE DOES NOT REFER TO OR CONTAIN ANY LANGUAGE REMINISCENT OF CSCE FINAL ACT, NOR DOES IT ALLUDE TO CHARTER 77. NEVERTHELESS, THOSE FEW BULGARIANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED IT, BELIEVE SUCH AN ARTICLE PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN WITHOUT EXAMPLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGITATION IN OTHER EE COUNTRIES AND THUS SEE IT AS KIND OF LOCAL EQUIVALENT OF CHARTER 77. STUDENTS IN PARTICULAR SEE ARTICLE AS SPEAKING DIRECTLY FOR THEM, SAYING IN PRINT WHAT THEY SAY AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT BULGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTIONS IN HIGH PLACES.

9. STUDENTS ALSO SAY THAT IT IS THE TWO CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS WHICH PROBABLY CAUSED THE MOST OFFENSE AND INEVITABLY HAD TO LEAD TO SANCTIONS. IN REFTEL, REPORTING ON BEGINNINGS OF CRITICISM CAMPAIGN BEGUN BY JULY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, WE NOTED THAT CRITICISM HAD AT THAT TIME BEEN LIMITED TO LOW-TO-MIDDLE LEVEL OF THE BUREAUCRACY, AND MOSTLY AIMED AT THOSE (SUCH AS FACTORY MANAGERS) HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR FAILURE TO MEET PLAN. WE CONCLUDED BY SAYING, "IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF IT (THE CRITICISM) BECOMES MORE SPECIFIC AND TARGETED HIGHER." IT NOW HAS, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS IS SOMETHING GOB WILL NOT TOLERATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, REPRISALS
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SOFIA00328
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770057-0225
Format: TEL
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770231/aaaabbrj.tel
Line Count: 236
Litigation Code IDs:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SOFIA 1824
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3294846
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CRITICISM CAMPAIGN ESCALATES AND TAKES ON TONE OF DISSI- DENCE; GOB REACTS SHARPLY
TAGS: PINS, BU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/259a17c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009